Department of Finance

Statement of Mandate
2013-2014

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1. Message from the Minister

I am pleased to present the 2013-2014 Statement of Mandate for the Department of Finance.

The Department of Finance supports government in establishing a sound fiscal plan and managing the Government of Nova Scotia's finances to support Nova Scotia's priorities. The department achieves this through its leadership role in establishing and administering the fiscal framework and financial controls of the Province, and providing meaningful and transparent financial reporting to all Nova Scotians.

This year marks the final year in this Government's effort of getting back to balance. Since 2009, the department has supported government's plan to balance the Government of Nova Scotia's budget. Reaching balance is an achievement but maintaining balance is the next challenge. The department will be supporting efforts across government to ensure continued discipline to maintain balance through financial policy leadership and timely, relevant advice in core areas. The department delivers financial, accounting, fiscal and economic policy advice and provides statistical services to help inform decision making across government.

The department also provides a number of crucial central services such as payroll and accounting. In 2013-2014, the department will be undertaking its new partnership with IBM to provide SAP services to the pubic sector. The transfer of these services to an external provider is a major transition for the department and its staff. (During the year, the department will also be establishing a new division to facilitate this relationship.) The department also houses the Internal Audit Centre, which reports to the Deputy Ministers Audit Committee.

Through its activities and responsibilities, the department supports government decision-making, from day-to-day operations to budget formulation. The Department of Finance relies on the dedication and expertise of its employees to achieve its objectives, and I would like to thank them for their ongoing efforts.

Honourable Maureen MacDonald
Minister of Finance

April 4, 2013

2. Department Mandate

The mandate of the Department of Finance flows primarily from the *Finance Act* which includes a leadership role in establishing and administering the fiscal framework and financial controls of the Province, and providing meaningful, transparent financial reporting, including the provincial budget, forecasts and Public Accounts.

The Department of Finance provides professional services and support to provincial government departments and entities, manages the debt of the Province, regulates select financial institutions and provides policy oversight to the securities sector. The department delivers financial, accounting, fiscal and economic policy advice and provides statistical services to help inform decision making across government, and regulates credit unions and the securities sector. Through its Payroll, Payment Transaction Services and Government Accounting divisions, the department also provides important services to the broader public sector, including district health authorities and school boards. The department supports the Minister of Finance in overseeing certain crown corporations and agencies, such as the NSLC.

3. Government Priorities

Get back to balance and ensure government lives within its means.

The Department of Finance undertakes analysis that responds to the broader economic and financial climate and on the basis of this, provides advice and recommendations to the decision making structures of government. The department ensures extensive, ongoing support to government fiscal planning through research, analysis and consultation across the provincial government and with federal counterparts. This year marks the end of Back to Balance process, which the Department of Finance has led on behalf of the government over the past four years. It will be an important year to monitor fiscal and budgetary developments as they emerge. It is also important to be thinking about what happens beyond balance, and how to maintain balance. The department, in conjunction with Treasury Board, has begun the process of identifying key considerations and challenges in this effort.

The department has a good track record of responding to emergent issues in both policy and procedure. The department is always seeking to find efficiencies, often reliant on new technology and requiring new policies, processes and technology. Divisions are constantly striving to become more service oriented or improve their service delivery – whether this is payroll services, policy or accounting.

The department also provides leadership on financial reporting. Across government, the department provides ongoing support and assistance to other departments and entities in financial, accounting, fiscal, economic and statistical analysis to help ensure that the

government's fiscal plan is being adhered to on a corporate level.

The Department's management of the treasury functions for the Province, which includes cash and debt management, is done with a view to maximizing efficiencies and minimizing risks while keeping government's short term needs and long term objectives in mind.
In the delivery of central client services, the department provides leadership in implementing changes in structures and processes that make operations more efficient within current resources. The divisions involved in service delivery are always seeking to find and improve efficiencies through modification or development of new policies and processes, as well as using technology.

Make health care better for you and family

The department's ongoing efforts to establish a sound fiscal framework and support good financial management and fiscal prudence allows government to allocate government resources to important priorities for Nova Scotians.

Create good jobs and grow the economy

The government has created a comprehensive, multi-sector approach to jobs and economic growth through the jobsHere plan. The Department of Finance's ongoing work in economic and fiscal information and policy supports the jobsHere plan and the corporate objective of increased investment and economic growth.

4. Performance Measurement

Outcome 1 – Produce a sound fiscal plan and provide timely financial information for the Province of Nova Scotia

Outcome	Measure	Past Data	2013-2014 Target	Long term target	Strategic Actions to achieve target
Produce a sound fiscal plan and provide timely financial information for the Province of Nova Scotia	Credit ratings of major rating agencies	DBRS: "A", positive outlook (June 12, 2012) S&P: "A+", stable outlook (July 17, 2012) Moody's: "Aa2", stable outlook (September 5, 2012)	Maintain or improve ratings	Maintain or improve ratings	Maintain debt plan and borrowing program and continue positive relations with investment community and rating agencies; assist Government to adopt a sustainable fiscal plan

	Unqualified auditor's report and timely release of consolidated financial statements (Public Accounts Volume 1)	Consolidated financial statements released with unqualified auditor's report: August 2, 2012 July 29, 2010 Sept 10, 2009 Aug 5, 2008 Aug 9, 2007 Sept 29, 2006 Sept 25, 2005 Sept 30, 2004	Released with unqualified auditor's report: on or before September 30, 2013	Released with unqualified auditor's report: on or before September 30 of each year	Advance planning and collaboration with other Departments, Entities and OAG; early problem and work load identification; adherence to PSAB standards
	Timely release of Public Accounts Volume 3	Volumes 2 released: August 2, 2012 July 28, 2011 July 29, 2010	Release on or before September 30, 2013	Release on or before September 30 of each year	Ongoing project planning
	Timely release of Forecast Updates	None (new measure)	Release forecast updates prior to September 30 and December 30, 2013	Release forecast updates prior to September 30 and December 30 of each year	Work collaboratively across government to support the collection and analysis of information

Outcome 2 – Provide financial policy and management advice based on fiscal prudence and best practice

Outcome	Measure	Past Data	2013-2014 Target	Long term target	Strategic Actions to achieve target
Provide financial policy and management advice based on fiscal prudence and best practice	Client survey to measure quality, timeliness and relevance of advice and service from DOF in key policy and process areas	None (new measure)	Review Management Manual policies older than 3 years and update if necessary	Review Management Manual policies every 3 years and update if necessary	Continue to respond to requests for information and advice in a timely fashion; use forums such as the Senior Financial Executive Forum and Financial Managers Forum to share information and best practice

Outcome 3 – Maximize efficiency and effectiveness of central client services

Outcome	Measure	Past Data	2013-2014 Target	Long term target	Strategic Actions to achieve target
Maximize efficiency and effectiveness of central client services	Percentage of pay delivered to employees on defined pay schedule, and with no errors	None (new measure)	100%	100%	Ongoing review of current policies and practices

	Percentage of payroll forms and time reports completed properly and filed on time	None (new measure)	100%	100%	
	Percentage of major payment deadlines met: Income Assistance, Payroll, Labour Market Payments	100%	100%	100%	Client service and legislative requirements
	Percentage of payments by electronic funds transfer (EFT)	None (new measure)	75% of payments through	95% of payments through EFT	Client service and workload efficiency

Outcome 4 – Provide leadership in fiscal, economic and financial regulatory policy across government to support decision making

Outcome	Measure	Past Data	2013-2014 Target	Long term target	Strategic Actions to achieve target
Provide leadership in fiscal, economic and financial regulatory policy across government to support decision making	Client survey to measure quality, timeliness and relevance of advice and service from DOF in key policy and process areas	None (new measure)	To maintain or improve client survey results once measurement is defined.	To maintain or improve client survey results once measurement is defined.	Build and maintain networks across government; liaise with other central agencies to ensure a shared proactive approach; maintain knowledge base through ongoing research and collaboration across all levels of government

Outcome 5 – Ensure the DOF provides a healthy and supportive workplace

Outcome	Measure	Past Data	2013-2014 Target	Long term target	Strategic Actions to achieve target
Ensure the DOF provides a healthy and supportive workplace	Employee engagement as measured by DOF employee response rate to corporate How's Work Going surveys (held biennially)	2011 – 62% (corporate rate 56%) 2009 – 75% (corporate rate 55%) 2007 – 61.7% (corporate rate 37%)	Improve employee response rate	Improve employee engagement as measured by employee response rate to How's Work Going	Ensure all staff are aware of How's Work Going survey and ensure all supervisors support their employees by allocating adequate work time to complete survey
	Job satisfaction, as measured by the How's Work Going survey	2011 – 53% 2009 – 76% 2007 – 62%	Improve the DOF employees' level of job satisfaction as measured in the How's Work Going survey that will be undertaken in March-April 2013	Improve DOF employees' level of job satisfaction	Implement the DOF Employee Engagement plan (December 2012) that addresses key areas of concerns as reported in the 2011 How's Work Going survey including internal communication, recognition and opportunities for growth

5. Budget Context

Finance			
	2012-2013 Estimate	**2012-2013 Forecast**	**2013-2014 Estimate**
Program & Service Area	($thousands)	($thousands)	($thousands)
Program Expenses:			
Senior Management	5,064	4,727	5,139
Associate Deputy Minister and Controller	28,451	28,692	30,813
Provincial Budgetary Planning and Coordination	820	764	812
Corporate Services Unit	1,476	1,468	1,458
Fiscal and Economic Policy	3,179	2,906	3,222
Total Program Expenses	38,990	38,557	41,444
Additional Information:			
Fees and Other Charges	(26)	(34)	(28)
Ordinary Recoveries	(3,438)	(3,438)	(2,479)
TCA Purchase Requirements	3,523	1,242	5,379
Provincial Funded Staff (FTEs) Net	257	224	214